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## 4-H 309 4-H Child Development : The Toddler

Connie M. Francis

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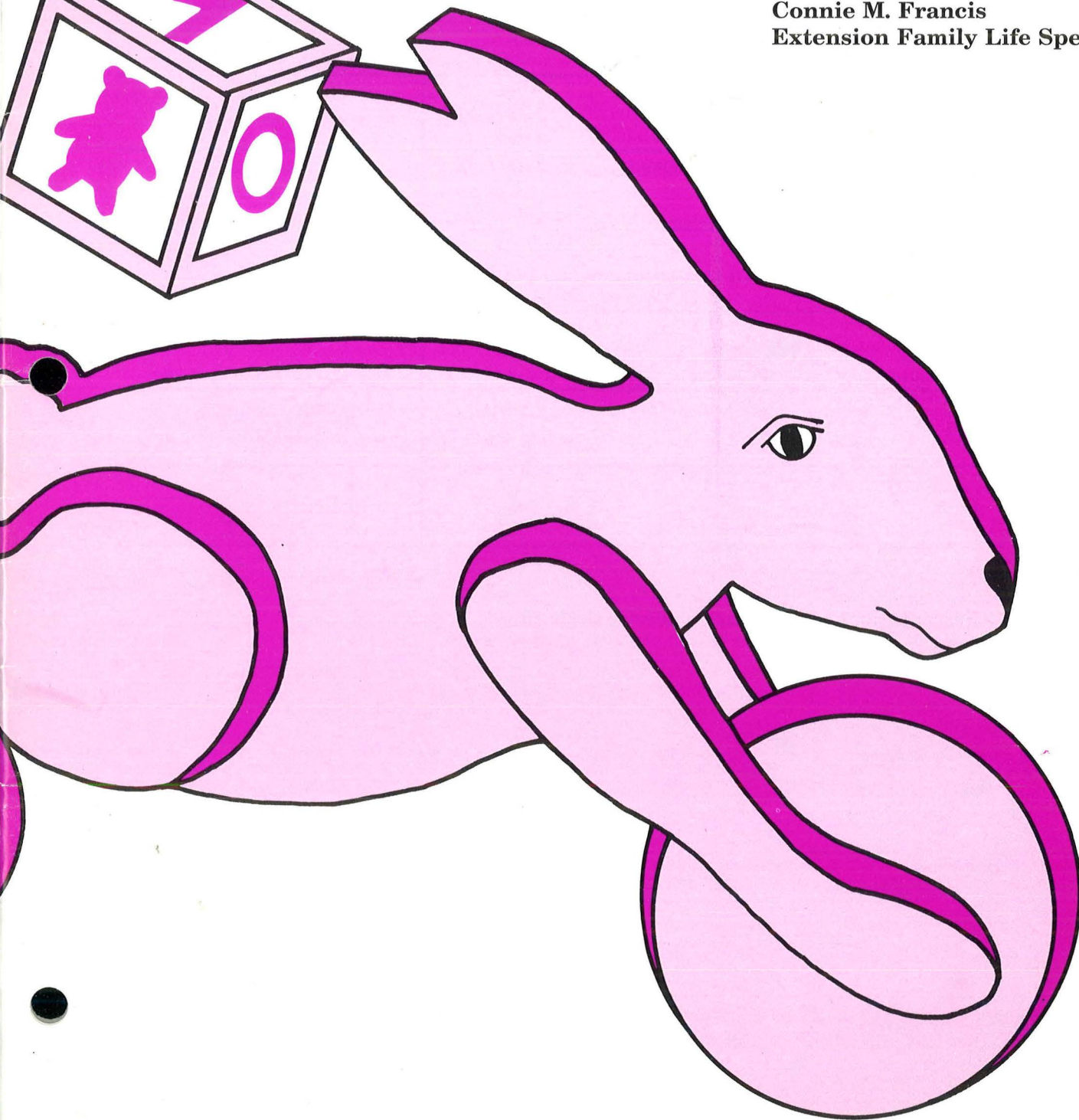
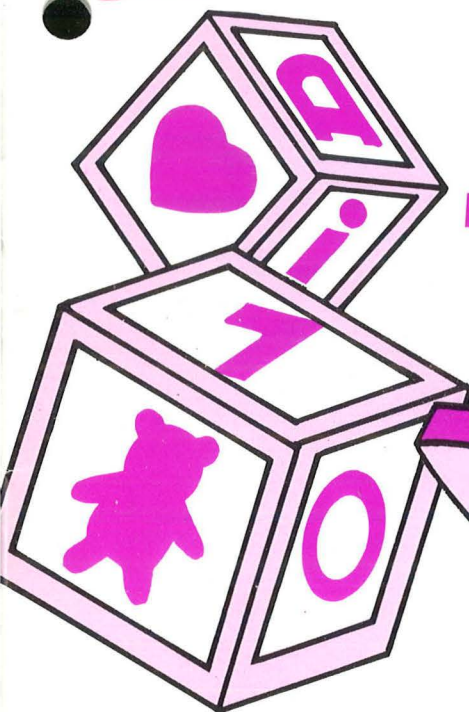
Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 309



# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT

# THE TODDLER

Connie M. Francis  
Extension Family Life Specialist



# The Toddler: 4-H Child Development

## Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age (Jan. 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Years in 4-H \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Club \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Leader or Parent \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to do these activities	From this activity I learned:	Comments:
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Presentations or community service activities:

# **THE TODDLER**

## **4-H Child Development Project**

**Connie M. Francis**  
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

Welcome to the 4-H Child Development Project. This project is written in four separate units:

**The Infant (Birth to 18 months)**

**The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)**

**The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)**

**Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)**

You have chosen to study the toddler. The objectives of this unit are:

- \* To understand how a toddler grows physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

- \* To learn how to care for a toddler — feed, clothe and help with bathroom activities.

- \* To choose types of play a toddler enjoys.

The amount of responsibility you have for caring for a child in this project depends on your age. Your age also will determine how you will study the toddler or toddlers you are watching. On the next page are some ideas about what you can do in this project.



# PROJECT SUGGESTIONS 1

## 9-11 years old

Because you are still very young, we suggest that you do not take a babysitting job to complete this project. You may choose to work with and observe your little brother or sister, a cousin, or a toddler in your neighborhood. You will feel more at ease learning about a toddler if an adult is present.

In this project you may choose some of the following activities:

- \* With the parents' guidance, prepare a snack and watch how the toddler eats.

- \* Notice what features on toddlers' clothing make dressing easier for the toddler.

- \* Choose a story a toddler will enjoy. Make a visual aid to help tell the story. This might be a television set, puppet, picture book, flannelboard, etc. After the story, do a simple art project that relates to the story you told.

- \* Watch the child playing "make-believe" and write a story about it.

- \* Teach the child some fingerplays.

- \* Make a simple toy for a toddler.

In a notebook or journal, write down what you learn about toddlers as you observe and do the activities in the project.

## 12-14 years old

If you and your parents feel you are capable of taking care of a toddler by yourself, you may babysit as you complete this project.

You may choose some of the following activities:

- \* Collect ideas for simple nutritious snacks for the toddler. Have a toddler help you prepare one or more of the snacks and eat them with you.

- \* Help a toddler dress and undress. Notice features in clothing that make it easier for a toddler to learn to dress himself or herself.

- \* Choose a story a toddler will enjoy.

Make a visual aid to help tell the story. It might be a television set, puppet, picture book, flannelboard, etc. Following the story, do a simple art project that relates to the story you told.

- \* With the parents' permission, take the toddler for a nature walk. Point out things in nature that would interest the child.

- \* Teach the toddler a simple game, fingerplay or song.

- \* Make a simple toy for a toddler.

- \* Using the clothing information given in this manual, visit one or more stores and make a written comparison of three different toddler garments.

Keep a notebook or journal and write down what you learn about toddlers as you do the activities you have selected.

## 15-19 years old

You may select activities from the lists for 9-11- year- olds and 12-14- year- olds. Additional ideas include:

- \* Following the parents' instructions, prepare a meal for a toddler.

- \* Help the child with a bath.

- \* Research a topic on some aspect of feeding, clothing, or playing with a toddler.

Keep a journal of things you learn about toddlers as you complete this project.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TODDLER 2

A toddler loves to explore. With newly discovered skills of walking and talking, a toddler is busy trying out the world and the people in it.

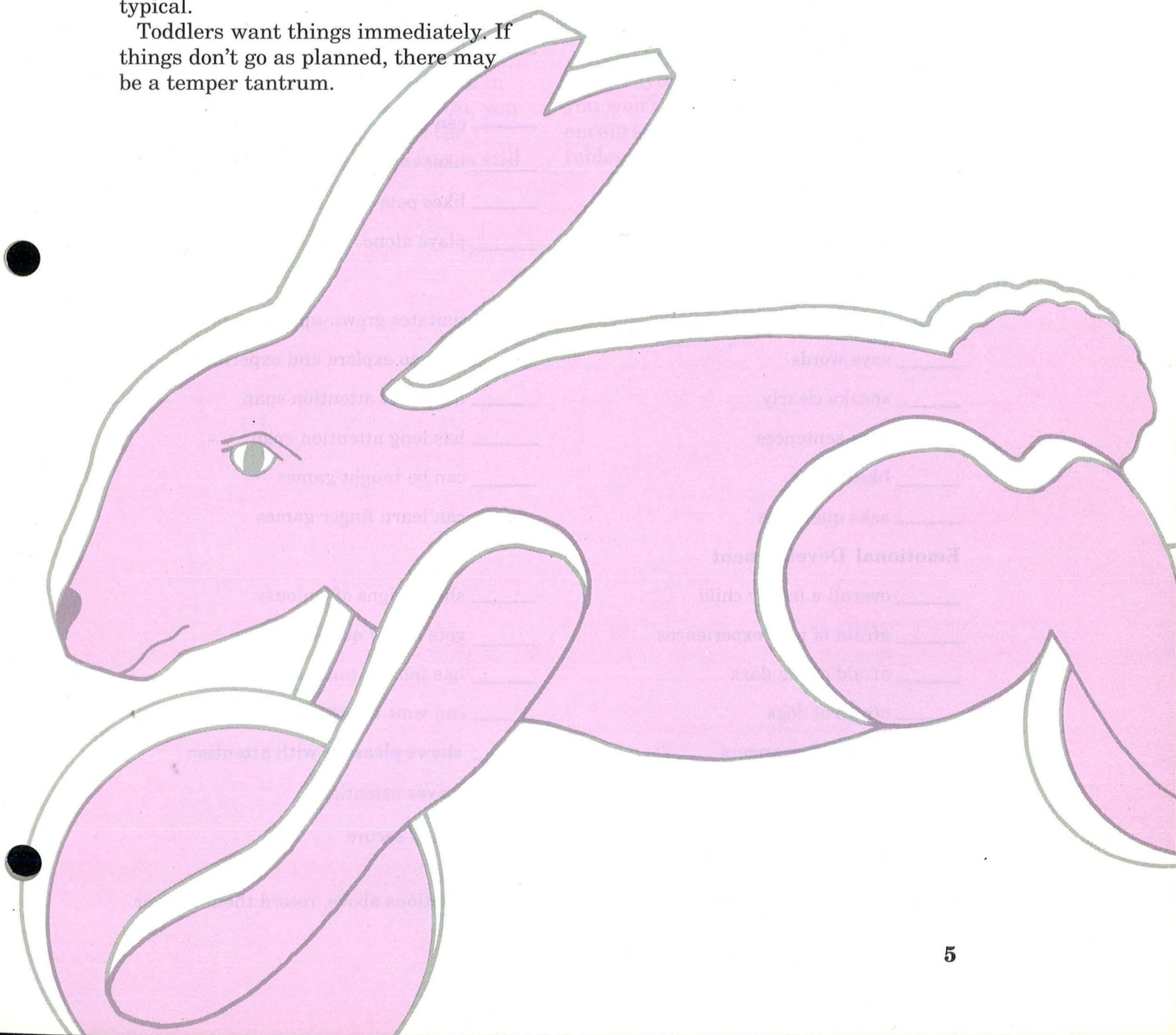
The toddler wants to reach, touch, taste and handle everything in sight. Through trial and error, the toddler gradually learns what is safe. At this age, a child develops favorites — in toys, in food and in people.

A toddler is very self-interested. Other children don't really matter to the toddler at this age. Playing alone is very typical.

Toddlers want things immediately. If things don't go as planned, there may be a temper tantrum.

To help you understand how toddlers develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally, observe a toddler and fill in the chart on the following page. You may want to put a copy this chart in your journal.

Observe the same child two or three times during your project to see how children develop. Or, you can see how individual children develop at different rates by observing more than one child of similar ages. Write in your journal about differences you observe.







## TALKING TO TODDLERS 3

The way you say and do things tells the toddler how you feel. A child will react to your tone of voice more than to your words. Your voice and actions should make the child feel you are a friend.

The first impression is very important. Give a toddler time to look you over. A child's curiosity plus your smile usually will begin a friendship.

Toddlers will be guided by your words, so choose them carefully. Use the word "do" rather than "don't." "Don't" tells the child only what not to do. A child needs to know what can be done and where. Instead of saying "Don't run in the house," say "If you want to run, you can go outside and run around the house." The toddler's need to run is still satisfied.

Whenever possible, give a child encouragement and approval. Compliments such as "Johnny ate all the food on his plate," or "Jill put on her shoes like an expert," let the child know what was done well.

Give a toddler a choice only when the decision is easy. A choice between just two things is best. Never offer a choice between two things when one of them isn't possible. Say "It's time to rest" rather than ask "Do you want to rest now?" Chances are the answer will be "No."

Avoid using bribery or forcing a child to do anything. "Eat your vegetables or you won't get any ice cream" does not encourage a child to eat and like vegetables.



# I AM A TODDLER

People call me a toddler because I "toddle and waddle" when I walk. I am between 18 months and 3 years old. I like to explore my home and the world around me.

This is how I grow:

## **When I am 18 months old, I can:**

- \* walk fairly steadily
- \* climb steps, one at a time
- \* say several words including my name
- \* throw a ball awkwardly
- \* paint all over my paper and my mother's table
- \* feed myself, and spill on myself
- \* pull a toy and walk backwards at the same time

## **When I am 2 years old, I like to:**

- \* walk upstairs
- \* unscrew lids, open boxes, string beads
- \* look at books, turning one page at a time
- \* speak very short sentences
- \* play by myself, but not with other children
- \* stand on my tiptoes; jump, using both my feet
- \* stand on one foot alone
- \* say "No!"

## **When I am 3 years old, I like to:**

- \* walk upstairs with alternate feet
- \* ride a tricycle with pedals
- \* imitate drawings by other people
- \* speak longer sentences
- \* undress myself
- \* wash myself
- \* be independent from my parents
- \* be aggressive with other children
- \* color with crayons
- \* put on my own shoes
- \* say a few rhymes



## CARING FOR THE TODDLER 4

### Feeding the Toddler

Happy mealtimes help children develop good eating habits. With cheerful companions and attractive, tasty meals, mealtimes make life seem good.

A toddler's first efforts at self-feeding can be very messy and frustrating to the person who has to clean up afterwards. Little hands have little control over the cup or spoon — food often lands on the lap or on the floor. Do not scold the child for this mess. Tidy eating comes with time and practice.

A toddler's appetite may vary from meal to meal. A child may be a fussy eater when overly tired or excited, in a strange place, or if a routine has been upset.

After active playing, it is a good idea to relax together before coming to the table. Reading a book or looking at a magazine may help.

Don't force a toddler to eat unwanted or disliked food. Offer only one new food at a time and give only a very small helping. Let the child decide when he or she has eaten enough. Allow enough time to eat (about 30 minutes) and then remove the food from the table. Let the child feel in control of what he or she eats. If you don't think the toddler got enough food at meals, provide nutritious snacks.

The toddler's daily nutritional needs include:

1. Milk and Cheese Group — two to three cups milk (other dairy products may replace some of the milk).

2. Meat, Fish, Poultry and Beans Group — two to three small servings. A small serving equals 1/2 ounce meat, poultry or fish, 1/2 egg, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, or 1/4 cup cooked dry beans, peas or other legumes.

3. Fruit and Vegetable Group — four or more small servings are recommended (one serving of citrus fruit, one of a dark green or deep yellow vegetable, plus two others). A serving for toddlers is 1/4 cup juice, up to 1/4 cup fruit or vegetables, or 1/4 of a piece of fruit. A rule of thumb is that a toddler's serving size for fruit or vegetables is approximately 1/4 of the adult serving size.

4. Cereal and Bread Group — four or more small servings. A serving for a toddler equals about 1/2 slice of bread, 1/4 cup cooked or dry cereal, or 1/4 cup cooked rice or pasta.

Here are some guidelines for good food and happy mealtimes:

- \* Serve the food in an attractive, eye-catching manner.

- \* Do not add so much spice and seasoning that the child doesn't recognize the food's original taste.

- \* Give small helpings and let the child ask for seconds.

- \* Congratulate the child for cleaning his or her plate.

- \* Encourage children to use a spoon, but let them use fingers, too. Table manners will come later, when a child is ready and able to eat more neatly.

- \* Be calm and cheerful at the table.

### Clothing the Toddler

Though a toddler may be awkward, a child of this age wants to learn to do things alone; this means learning to dress and undress, too. Encourage a toddler by praising what has already been done. At times, both feet will go in one pant leg, coveralls will go on backwards, or suspenders will be hooked to

the wrong side. Guide the toddler so he or she can learn the right way to dress.

Along with teaching a child how to dress, you may teach him or her how to keep clothes on and fairly clean.

Teach the child to select the right clothes for an activity by repeatedly explaining how certain clothing is used. Say "Sunday hat for Sunday," or "snow-boots for snow," or "bare feet for swimming." This helps the child relate the clothes to the situation. Too often children catch colds or their bare hands get cold because they have not been taught to dress properly for outdoor activities.

Because a toddler is very active, clothes need to fit loosely and not hinder movements. Garments that hang from the shoulders rather than being fitted at the waist are good for the active child.

The best clothes for toddlers are those that are easily taken off and put on, and easily managed at the toilet. Such clothes help build self-confidence and independence, and improve muscular coordination.

Self-help clothes have simple openings, are well marked so the child knows the difference between the front and back, have elastic at fitted areas, and are simple in design.

Toddler's clothing is purchased by size, not by the age of the child. Here are the standard measurements most manufacturers use for toddlers' clothing:

Size	Height Inches	Weight Pounds
1	31	25
2	34	29
3	37	34
4	40	38

## Bath and Bathroom Activities

When a toddler is taking a bath, you will probably find water everywhere in the bathroom. Given a wash cloth and a floating toy, a toddler will use both to splash in the water. A child may go through some simple motions of washing, such as touching the wash cloth to the mouth and nose, but most of bath time is devoted to play.

Watch toddlers closely while they are in the tub. Toddlers do not need a lot of water in the bathtub — three to four inches is plenty.

There are two important safety rules to remember when a toddler is bathing:

- \* Do not allow a toddler to stand in the tub.

- \* Do not leave a toddler unattended in a bathtub.

Watch toddlers closely. They can slip and injure themselves or drown very quickly, even in a small amount of water.

Make bath time a happy time by letting the toddler play, providing floating toys or soft plastic bottles, and ignoring the splashing water.

Besides learning to bathe, a toddler is learning to keep hands and face clean. A toddler is eager to wash hands, mainly because it's fun to play in the water. Encourage cleaning up without too much play. Be sure hands and face are washed before and after meals, after completing art projects, and whenever they're dirty.

After seeing other members of the family doing it, toddlers will want to brush the 16 or 20 teeth that have grown so far. They enjoy the fresh feeling after brushing teeth.



Usually a toddler has been trained to go to the toilet between the ages of 2 and 2 1/2. Remember that accidents happen, especially when toddlers are playing outdoors, away from home or excited.

### **A Toddler's Bedtime**

A toddler's bedtime should be a happy time.

Most children have a "getting ready" time before they actually get to bed. This "getting ready" may last 5 minutes or 30 minutes. It often helps to tell the child in advance that it will soon be bedtime.

Try not to rush the process of going to bed. Be friendly and helpful. If you are firm and fair, most toddlers will be helpful and cooperative.

Carry the smaller child to bed, giving affectionate hugs. Take older toddlers by the hand while you chat about the pleasant things that will happen tomorrow.

If there is time, tell or read a story to the child. Choose a story that will be restful for the child. The story should have a happy, peaceful ending.

Some children enjoy sleeping with favorite stuffed animals or other toys. Usually these toys are soft and cuddly. A child also may have a special blanket to sleep with. Check with the parents about bedtime toys and blankets. Without these things, a child may cry and fuss.

A toddler needs about 12 hours of sleep each night. In addition, naps during the day may last one or two hours.

Check on a sleeping child. Be sure no drafts are falling on the bed.

If a child is afraid of the dark, leave a light on or sit beside the bed for a while.

## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY 5

A large part of the toddler's day is spent playing. Play is one way to learn about oneself and the surrounding world. Through trial and error, new skills are learned.

Play also helps get rid of extra energy. It is a chance for the child to practice physical skills. It promotes a good appetite and healthful sleep.

There are several types of play. During active play the child is learning how to run, jump, play games or throw a ball. Quiet play may be reading a storybook, making an animal out of clay or doing a fingerplay.

Several types of play are discussed in this section. Use these suggestions, or ideas of your own, for toddler's play.

### **The Magic of Make-Believe**

Much of a toddler's play is an imitation of what the child sees and hears. For most children, make-believe begins at about 18 months. A small child's first attempts to play a parent — taking care of a baby and preparing meals — often are clumsy and awkward. But by repeating the game over and over, the child soon develops skills in parenting dolls or stuffed animals.

Watch a child playing make-believe. Play is the child's way of finding self-expression, of acting out ideas and feelings. At the same time, the child learns many skills while playing, such as holding a doll, catching a ball and riding a tricycle.

Although make believe doesn't necessarily involve toys, most children use them to carry out their imaginative role. A good toy is one that appeals to the child's imagination, and can be used in many ways, for many things. Old pocketbooks, a fireman's hat, small toy animals, play money and a doll buggy are toys that develop a child's imagination. A wardrobe of dress-up clothes makes the play seem even more realistic.

Encourage the toddler to make believe, and occasionally enter into the fantasy yourself. This is one way you can help the toddler understand the world.

### **Nature Hike**

Nature hikes can be a fun way to teach a toddler about the outdoor world.

As you walk through the backyard or a nearby park, look at the clouds, peek under rocks, and point out bird nests and other interesting things in nature.

Have the child collect interesting things in a paper sack. These can be used to show and tell parents about the hike.

If you hike around midmorning or midafternoon, pack a simple lunch to carry along. It may be just an apple and some crackers or cookies. Toddlers enjoy eating outdoors.

It is important to keep the hike short. Toddlers have short legs and tire more easily than you. Also limit the number of activities during the walk. If toddlers get too tired, they won't enjoy the hike.

Play "touch and feel" on the nature hike. When the child picks things up, ask if they are soft or hard, cool or warm, smooth or rough, light or heavy. Here are some things that a child can touch and tell you about:

**SOFT** - grass, feather, fuzzy caterpillar, kitten

**HARD** - rock, sidewalk, stick

**LIGHT** - leaf, feather

**HEAVY** - log, large rock

**COOL** - shade, water, ice

**WARM** - sun, skin

**ROUGH** - rock, bark on tree, pine cone

**SMOOTH** - leaf, your skin

Take a trip to a zoo, pet shop or animal farm where a child can see many different kinds of animals, birds, insects and fish. Watch children carefully so they do not get scratched or bitten.

### **Telling a Story**

At about the age of 2, toddlers enjoy looking at pictures of familiar things. Soon the child has enough patience to listen to short stories about each picture. The toddler may not completely understand the story, but if you use your face and voice to help tell the story, the toddler will enjoy it.

Story telling also is important in helping the child learn to listen and sit still.

Toddlers have short attention spans. A 2-year-old will listen only about two or three minutes. A 3-year-old will probably listen up to five minutes. So stories must be short and simple.

Realistic stories are very good because they teach about the world and other people. Avoid stories that are so "make-believe" they confuse the child. Some make-believe stories such as ghost and witch stories may frighten a child.

### **Toddlers enjoy**

- stories about themselves and their play activities,

- stories about things that move and make noises (choo-choo trains, cows that moo, tugboats that go putt-putt),

- stories that repeat lines over and over again ("I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down"), and

- stories that have large, simple, colorful pictures.

Here are story telling suggestions:

- Be sure the child is comfortable. Sit facing the child so he or she can see your facial expressions as you tell the story.

- Tell the story slowly and allow for questions and comments as you go. Try to include only one subject in the story or the child will lose interest.

- Don't just read the story. Use a lot of facial and vocal expressions. This will entertain and help the child learn expression skills.

- Let the child leave before the story is finished. Try telling it later in the day. Some children will want you to tell the story again.

There are several things you can use to help tell a story:

- story or picture book

- flannelboard with pictures that represent parts of the story or people in it

- toys which represent something in the story, such as a stuffed rabbit, a car or a toy train

These visuals will make the story more interesting to the child. Choose one for your story.

### **Story Books and Picture Books**

Toddlers enjoy books that are small and easy to handle. They should have large colorful pictures, with only one or two lines of story to each page.

Cloth books are best for toddlers because they won't tear. Many cloth



books have a protective coating so they can be wiped off when they get sticky or dirty.

You may want to make a simple cloth picture book rather than buy one. Here are some suggested steps:

1. Choose a topic for the book.

2. Make the pages—

- Cut pieces of cloth large enough for two pages.

- Lay the pieces together and sew down the center to hold the pages together.

- Fold where sewn and stitch about 1/4 inch in from the edge to form a binding.

3. Use cloth paints, iron-on tape or fancy sewing stitches to make your pictures on the page. Use only one side of each page for your pictures.

Cardboard books are also easy to make:

1. Select pictures from magazines and paste them onto heavy cardboard.

2. Punch holes in the pages and tie them together with shoestring, yarn or some other heavy cord.

You may want to let the child create his or her own book. Have the child tell you a story. On each page of the book, write one sentence of the story. Then have the child draw a picture to illustrate each sentence.

### Finger Plays and Action Songs

Toddlers are fascinated with songs and words that can be acted out. They will watch very intently and occasionally repeat a movement or sound you have made.

Go through the motions very slowly, guiding the child's hands as you say the

words. Repeat the actions and words several times and soon the child will want to do the fingerplay alone.

A toddler may enjoy these fingerplays:

#### TEDDY BEAR

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around,  
(turn around)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the  
ground, (touch the floor)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your  
shoe, (touch your shoe)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, how are you?  
(shake hands)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, go upstairs,  
(finger motion)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, say your  
prayers, (hands clasped)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the  
lights, (close eyes)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, say  
"goodnight" (rest head on folded  
hands).

#### TWO LITTLE BLACKBIRDS

Two little blackbirds (clench fists,  
thumbs sticking up)

Sitting on a hill. One named Jack,  
(wiggle left thumb)

One named Jill. (wiggle right thumb)  
Fly away Jack! (put one fist behind  
back)

Fly away Jill! (put other fist behind  
back)

Come back Jack! (bring one fist for-  
ward, wiggle thumb)

Come back Jill! (bring other fist for-  
ward, wiggle thumb)



## Music

Children enjoy listening to music even as small infants. They enjoy the rhythm and melody of each song. They may clap their hands to gay music or they may be quieted at bedtime by soft, smooth music.

When you are with a toddler, hum or sing simple songs you know. You don't need to try to teach the songs right away. The child will pick up notes just by listening to you. You can teach the song later.

At this time, the toddler is trying to learn to control his or her singing voice. So far singing has been a mixture of notes. Now the child wants to combine these notes into a song people will recognize. Encourage the toddler by letting him or her know when you recognize a song.

Many of the toddler's songs are picked up from television shows and advertisements. These songs are repeated over and over again during the child's favorite television programs.

Musical games also help teach new songs. "London Bridge" and "Farmer in the Dell" are musical games that toddlers enjoy.

There are many different types of toy musical instruments that can help a child learn rhythm. These include bells, xylophones, drums, blocks, shakers and triangles.

Or a child can learn to blow a trumpet, harmonica or small flute.

String instruments, such as a small guitar, also are very popular toys for children.

## Creative Art

Even at this young age, children want to use their hands to be creative and imaginative. Although much of a toddler's art may not be recognizable to you, it means a lot to the child.

Avoid making patterns for the toddler to follow. The child will probably feel unable to do as well as you have, and

may want you to make the item for him or her.

Allowing the toddler complete freedom in making a work of art encourages the development of creative talents. Toddlers usually are not very concerned about what the art will look like when it is finished. They are mainly interested in the fun and excitement of doing it.

As you watch the toddler work on "art" projects, you will notice that hand movements are very awkward. There may be as much art work on the table as there is on the paper. Cover the table with newspaper before beginning a messy project and cleanup will be much easier. Use low dishes for paint and water. They are harder to tip over.

Because creative art and play may be messy, you need to protect a toddler's clothes. A simple apron works well.

1. Use a piece of plastic about 18 inches x 45 inches. Other washable materials may be used also.

2. In the center of the piece, cut an oval for the child's head. Be sure there is enough room for the child's head to get in and out.

3. Bind the oval and outer edge of the apron with bias tape, using the long stitch on the sewing machine.

## Finger Paint

Children enjoy finger painting because they get to paint with their hands. You may use one of the recipes for finger paints below, or one of your own.

### Finger Paint

3/4 cup liquid laundry starch  
1 1/2 cups soap flakes  
Cold water  
1 quart boiling water

Mix the starch with a little cold water. Pour the mixture and soap flakes slowly into rapidly boiling water. Stir constantly until the mixture thickens.

Use food coloring or powdered tempera paints for color.

### Instant Finger Paint

Use non-toxic dry powder paste called wheat paste. Sift or shake paste into cold water. Beat until it is thick enough for a finger paint. Add food coloring or powdered tempera for color. This paint gets thicker as it stands.

### Rapid Finger Paint

Pour a little liquid starch onto moistened paper. Shake or sprinkle food coloring or tempera paint powder over the starch. Children can mix the ingredients as they paint.

White butcher paper or freezer wrap is excellent for finger painting. You also may use shelf paper.

Dip the paper in water or dampen it with a sponge. Lay the paper on the table, pressing out the air bubbles caught between the table and the paper. Be sure to give the child a large piece of paper to allow room for hand movements.

### Play Dough

2 cups water  
2 tablespoons powdered alum  
1/2 cup salt  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
few drops of food coloring  
2 cups flour

Mix water, salt and food coloring in a

large pan. Bring to a boil. Boil until salt is dissolved. Remove from heat. Add alum, vegetable oil and flour. Stir until dough is stiff. Cool. Turn out onto a flat surface and knead until smooth. Store in tightly covered container.

### Blowing Bubbles

Children are fascinated with bubbles. They are even more fascinated when they can blow and pop bubbles themselves. Here is a recipe you may try:

### Homemade Bubbles

Combine 1 cup water and 2 teaspoons liquid dishwashing detergent. Mix well. Bubbles will be less fragile if you add 1 teaspoon of glycerin. You can buy glycerin at a drug store.

Children can blow bubbles through a plastic pipe, a funnel, drinking straws or even through a circle made with their thumb and index finger.

### Games for the Toddler

A toddler does not play very well with other children of the same age. Being together is fun, but each one has a strong sense of "mine" that shows up, especially during games. Each one wants to dominate the game rather than letting other playmates take their turn.



Games that have two players are good for a toddler. With just two players, turns come often. At the same time, the two will share the fun. Tag, hide-and-seek, chase-my-shadow and follow the leader are good games for the toddler.

### **Finding and Making Toys for the Toddler**

Often you can find things around the house that make good toys for toddlers. A toddler likes to play with wooden spoons, kettle lids and even old paper boxes.

Examine a toddlers' toys carefully for safety hazards or problems. A good toy for a toddler is one that:

- \* is simple (An elaborate one may confuse the child.)
- \* has no small parts that can be put in the mouth and swallowed, or be pulled or chewed off
- \* is brightly colored (Too many colors may confuse the child. It may also distract from what the toddler learns from the toy.)
- \* has no sharp edges and points
- \* won't cause illness if chewed (Some paints are poisonous.)
- \* will help a child grow
  - by teaching something new
  - by helping develop skills and coordination
  - by satisfying urges to squeeze, cuddle and love
  - by allowing the child to use imagination.

Toys which toddlers enjoy include:

- \*assorted sizes of balls and blocks
- \*stuffed animals and dolls
- \*small tricycles or kiddie cars

- \*take-apart and put-together toys
- \*pull-push toys
- \*sit-on vehicles
- \*doll carriages
- \*wagons
- \*hobby horses
- \*telephones
- \*sandboxes

When you make a toy for a toddler, remember the guidelines for good toys for toddlers. Then go ahead and make it. Here are some toys you could make.

### **Stuffed Animals or Dolls**

1. Choose colorful pieces of washable material.
2. Pin the doll or animal pattern on the material. (Use your imagination and make your own pattern, or select a pattern that is ready to use.)
3. Cut out the pieces, allowing 5/8 inch for seam allowances.
4. Sew the main parts of the animal or doll together, leaving an opening so you can stuff the filling into place. (It is a good idea to stitch the seams twice so they'll be less likely to split open when you put in the stuffing.)
5. Choose a filling that will not hurt the toddler if the seam does split open. Pieces of nylons or polyester fiber fill make excellent fillings. The filling must be washable.

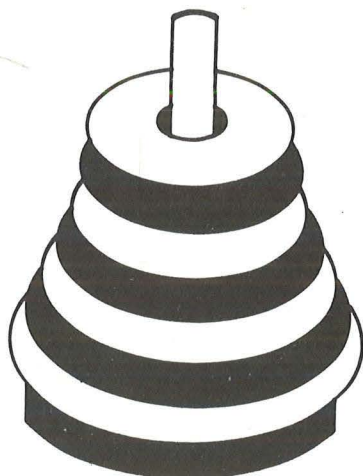
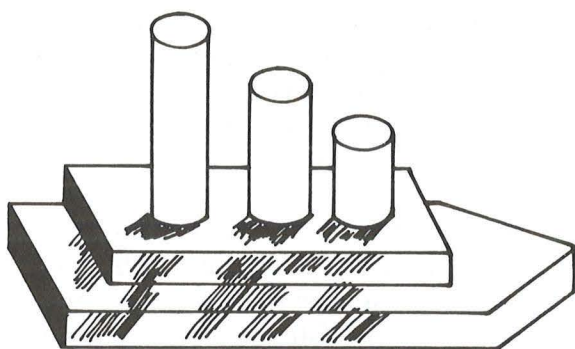
6. Sew on the eyes, nose, mouth and other decorations using fancy embroidery stitches. Choose stitches that will not come apart or be easily pulled. Avoid buttons, hooks and eyes, and other small notions that a toddler might pull off and accidentally swallow.

### Take-Apart, Put-Together Toys

Because there are so many ways to make this type of toy, use your imagination and construct one you think the child will enjoy. Remember to make all the parts smooth and simple in design. Be sure parts are large enough that they cannot be put in the mouth.

If you want to paint the parts of your toy, choose a non-toxic paint. Beware of paints that contain lead, antimony, arsenic, selenium, soluble barium, mercury or cadmium. These chemicals are poisonous.

Here are some examples of take-apart, put-together toys:



### Building Blocks

Blocks are some of the best toys for toddlers. Use new lumber or scraps from the lumberyard or your home workshop to make squares, rectangles, triangles and notched blocks. Make round blocks from dowels or closet rods.

Carefully sand the edges of each block. Leave them unfinished or paint them with non-toxic paint.

### Educational Toys

Educational toys for toddlers should be simple and teach only one idea at a time. Be specific about what you want the toddler to learn.

A drop box is a simple toy that helps children learn about colors and shapes. If you decide to teach about colors, make all the pieces the same shape. If you want to teach about shapes, make all the pieces the same color.

1. Make a slit about 7 to 9 inches long in the top of a small box. (A shoe box works well.)

2. Paint or cover the box with contact paper. Use bright colors.

3. Use 4 to 6 inch squares of cardboard to cut out various shapes such as circles, squares, triangles or stars. Use only two or three shapes for toddlers.

4. Color, paint or cover the shapes with contact paper. Use simple colors such as black, white, red, green, yellow and blue.

Give the child one cardboard piece at a time. Ask what color or shape it is. Praise the child when the answer is right. When it is wrong, give the correct answer.

If the child answers correctly, drop the

pieces into the box. If the answer is wrong, do not put the piece into the box. Use it again after you have shown the child three or four other pieces.

After all the pieces have been correctly identified, or the child is tired of the game, let the child take the lid off so he or she can see all pieces.

### **Toy Furniture**

Much of the toddler's play involves furniture. A child sits on a chair to eat or finger paint. To play house, a child needs a crib for the doll and a stove for cooking meals.

With an adult's help, make a piece of furniture for the child's play. Consider how big the child is. Some measurements you might need:

- \* For a chair, measure from the knee to the floor and also from the knee to the lower end of the child's spine. (Make this last measurement when the child is sitting down.)

- \* For cupboards, sinks, stoves and small dressers, measure from the floor to the child's waist.

- \* Cradles and beds may be any size, as long as the child's dolls fit into them.

With these measurements you can make toy furniture. Use heavy materials such as wood to make the chairs and furniture that need to hold the child's weight. You can make a stove, refrigerator and sink from sturdy cardboard boxes. Use markers or tempera paint to add details such as doors and knobs to the furniture you make.

Be sure the furniture is safe for toddlers to use.

- \* Is wood sanded so all surfaces are smooth and splinter free?

- \* Are the edges of wood sanded until they are well-rounded?

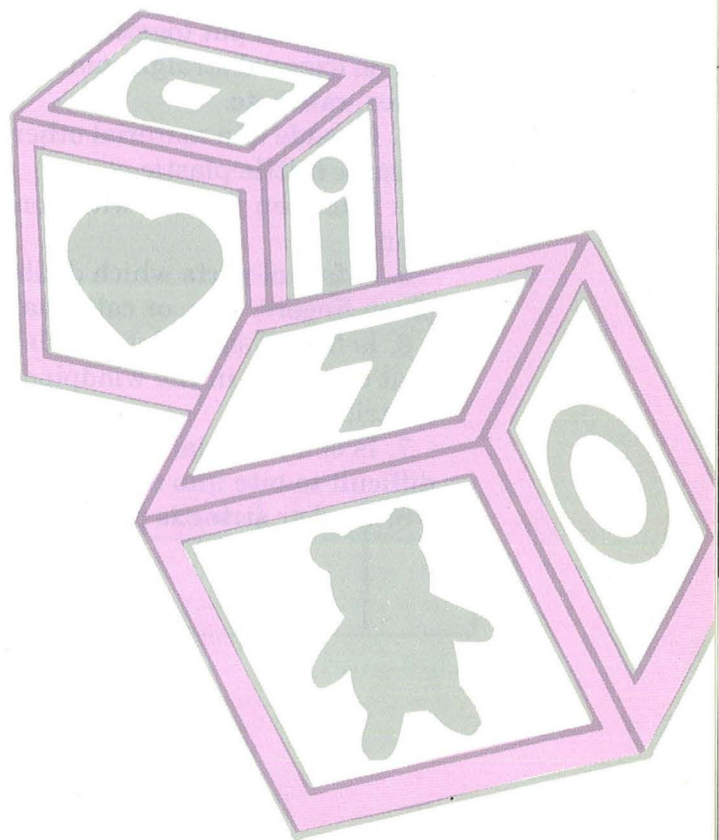
- \* Is the paint non-toxic?

- \* Is the cardboard sturdy enough for the toddler's play?

- \* Have loose staples or other possible hazards been removed from cardboard?

These are just some suggestions for toys for toddlers. Use your imagination and come up with ideas of your own.

When you have finished your toy, evaluate it using "Guidelines for Evaluating Toys" found on the following page. If your toy meets these requirements, then you may let a toddler play with it.





# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TOYS

## Originality

Creating and constructing imaginative toys can be an opportunity for you to express your knowledge and CREATIVITY.

1. Shows evidence of originality in design.
2. Exhibits unique use of available and inexpensive materials.
3. Is a creative adaption of an existing idea.

Superior	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

## Safety

Toy should be designed so that child can use the toy safely.

1. Is free of sharp or pointed edges.
2. Has been put together so that there are no exposed straight pins, sharp wires, rails, etc.
3. Is made of a material other than glass or brittle plastic.
4. Has been painted with non-toxic paint.
5. Is free of parts which deliberately pinch fingers, toes, or catch hair.
6. Is free of small detachable parts that can lodge in the windpipe, ears or nostrils.
7. Is of a material that would be difficult to bite into and/or swallow.
8. Cord or string is no longer than 12".

Superior	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

### Appropriate for the Child's Age and Development

Toys are a child's tools for learning and are part of a rich learning environment. Toys should be appropriate and usable at each age level.

1. Attracts the child's attention and interest.
2. Stimulates the senses (color, texture, shape).
3. Enhances intellectual development.
4. Is versatile — can be used in a variety of ways.

Superior	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

### Promotes Growth and Development

Toy should be age specific.

1. Can be used by the child when playing alone as well as with others.
2. Encourages interaction between child and others.
3. Helps develop large muscle skills (pulling, walking, sitting on).
4. Helps develop small muscle coordination (stacking, pulling things in and out).

Superior	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

### Quality of Construction

The toy should be able to withstand the rigors of child use.

1. Is durable.
2. Buttons, trims, and other parts are well-fitted and securely fastened.
3. Sewing is well done and secure.
4. Is washable.
5. Has been carefully and attractively constructed.
6. No rough edges and corners are smooth.

Superior	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

## FOR MORE HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT

- \* Ask your parents
- \* Ask your 4-H leader
- \* Read the 4-H Babysitting Project manual
- \* Refer to the following Fact Sheets:  
(They are available at your Extension office.)

FL18 Your Child at Eighteen to Twenty-One Months

FL19 Your Child at Twenty-One to Twenty-Four Months

FL20 Twenty-Four Months and Beyond

FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children

FL50 Baby Sitting

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